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As a Weapon, The Maverick Is Just That

The Maverick is a \$58,000 air-borne antitank missile that should never have made it off the drawing board.

The trouble with the Maverick is its guidance system. It requires a pilot to pick up an enemy tank on an infrared screen, lock onto it by flying in a straight line for 15 seconds, and then fire. But according to an unpublished government study, the Maverick is riddled with problems.

Good Choice—I heartily endorse President Reagan's selection of Elliott Abrams to head the human rights bureau at the State Department.

Abrams is a quietly competent diplomat. A search-through confidential State Department memos and cables revealed two incidents that illustrate his abilities.

Last May, the United States wound up voting against the World Health Organization's infant formula code. Essentially, it was a vote

against infants and in favor of the formula manufacturers. The United States was the only developed nation that voted against the code. It turned out to be an embarrassment.

Confidential documents show that Abrams developed a strategy that would have avoided the humiliation. He flew to Switzerland and quietly persuaded the director of the World Health Organization to modify the code. But Abrams was overruled by his superiors and his quiet diplomacy failed at the last minute.

A similar incident happened more recently. Abrams urged United Nations Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick not to veto the nomination of Tanzania's foreign minister, Salim Salim, to be secretary general. He was the Third World's candidate.

Intelligence sources had reported that the Soviet planned to veto Salim. So Abrams suggested that Kirkpatrick abstain from the voting and let the Russians take the heat from Third World nations. But Kirkpatrick ignored Abrams.

Perhaps he will be listened to more carefully when he becomes the human rights chief.

Suspicious Sale—The Pentagon routinely sells sophisticated military arms to friendly countries around the globe. The sale of the Aircraft

Warning and Control System to Saudi Arabia is just one example. But now the United States is peddling goods that our own armed forces don't have.

The Navy, for instance, is quietly planning to sell Spain some anti-submarine weapons so advanced that they haven't been installed on U.S. ships yet. The sale is part of a \$25 million package that includes torpedo conversion kits and a super-secret submarine-detection device.

U.S. officials claim the equipment is needed to protect Spain's vast Atlantic and Mediterranean coastlines. But there's an interesting coincidence: Spain recently voted to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the arms package just might be the reward.

Rep. Joseph Addabbo (D-N.Y.), who heads the Appropriations subcommittee on defense, is suspicious and wants to stop the sale.